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Appln. No. 09/696,114
Amdt. dated December 23, 2003
Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

The October 1, 2003 Office Action and the Examiner's comments have been carefully considered. In response, claims are cancelled and amended, and remarks are set forth below in a sincere effort to place the present application in form for allowance. The amendments are supported by the application as originally filed. Therefore, no new matter is added.

Inasmuch as the present amendment raises no new issues for consideration, and, in any event, places the present application in condition for allowance or in better condition for consideration on appeal, its entry under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.116 are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC 112

In the Office Action, claims 150-165 are rejected under the second paragraph 35 USC 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. In response, claims 150 and 151 are amended in a sincere effort to obviate the indefiniteness rejection. In view of the amendment of the

Appln. No. 09/696,114
Amdt. dated December 23, 2003
Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2003

claims, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 150-165 under the second paragraph of 35 USC 112 are respectfully requested.

Claim 165 is amended to correct a typographical error in the claim in ensure the consistent use of claim terminology. No new matter is added and no new issues are raised by the amendment to claim 165.

PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

In the Office Action, claims 142 and 147-152 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by USP 6,233,684 (Stefik et al.). Claims 124-140, 141 and 143-146 are rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Stefik et al. Claim 141 is rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Stefik et al. in view of USP 6,131,162 (Yoshiura et al.). Claims 153-161 are rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Stefik et al. in view USP 5,532,920 (Hartrick et al.). Claims 160-162 are rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Stefik et al. and Hartrick et al. and further in view of Yoshiura et al. Claims 163 and 165 are rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Stefik et al. in view of USP 5,278,904 (Servi).

Appln. No. 09/696,114
Amdt. dated December 23, 2003
Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2003

Claim 164 is rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Stefik et al. and Servi, and further in view of Yoshiura et al.

In response, claims 138, 143 and 146 are cancelled and claims 124, 142 and 163 are amended in a sincere effort to place the present application in form for allowance. The amendments are supported by the application as originally filed. Therefore, no new matter is added.

In the Office Action independent claim 142 is rejected as being anticipated by Sterik et al.

In response, claim 142 is amended to include limitations from claims 143 and 146 that the print service station sets an estimated copy charge in accordance with the print specification, indicates the estimated copy charge for the customer, and when the customer agrees to the estimated copy charge, the print service station sends an order signal to the data service system.

Stefik et al. do not disclose, teach or suggest an estimated copy charge set by the print service station in accordance with the print specification. Since the print store and the print repository of Stefik et al. merely receive the image data, a print service station which sends an order signal to the data service system when the customer agrees to the estimated copy charge is not anticipated by Stefik et al. and would not have

Appin. No. 09/696,114
Amdt. dated December 23, 2003
Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2003

been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made in view of the teachings of Stefik et al. and the other prior art of record.

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts on page 4, line 14 (with regard to claims 142 and 147-152) and page 6, line 15 (with regard to claims 124-140, 141 and 143-146) that Stefik et al. teach a print store (shown in Fig. 16) which the Examiner contends corresponds to the print service station of the present claimed invention.

However, the print service station of the present claimed invention as defined by claims 124 and 142 is patentably distinct from the print store of Stefik et al.

As recited in claims 124 and 142, the print service station is connected to a network and installed at a place where the print service station provides print service for a customer. The print service station has a print managing section to input a print order/specification of a customer to print an ordered book and to communicate with the data service system so as to obtain image data of the ordered book through the network.

In contrast, the print store of Stefik et al. is directly connected to the publisher (see column 16, lines 54-55 of Stefik

Appln. No. 09/696,114
Amdt. dated December 23, 2003
Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2003

et al.) and is not connected to a customer work station which is connected to the publisher as specifically recited in the claims.

Therefore, in Stefik et al. the publisher inputs a print specification of a customer to print an ordered book and the print store merely receives data from the publisher. Accordingly, since the print store of Stefik et al. does not include a function to input a print specification of a customer to print an ordered book and to communicate with the data service system so as to obtain image data of the ordered book through the network, the print store of Stefik et al. does not render the present claimed invention defined by claims 124 and 142 unpatentable.

Also in the Office Action, the Examiner asserts (see page 5, lines 1-5 of the Office Action) that Stefik et al. teach at Figs. 5-7, and column 8, lines 22-38 "transmitting an order signal from customer to the data service system and the data service system," and "transmitting job ID information and image data on the basis of the job ID information to the printer station in response to the order."

As disclosed in Fig. 5 of Stefik et al., Repository 2 receives a user request to print digital work and sends the digital work to a printer repository. Therefore, based on the teachings of Stefik et al., the printer repository merely

Appln. No. 09/696,114
Amdt. dated December 23, 2003
Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2003

receives the digital work the same as the print store shown in Fig. 16. Accordingly, the printer repository of Stefik et al. is not similar or interchangeable with the print service station of the present claimed invention as defined by claims 124 and 142.

The other references of record do not close the gap between the present claimed invention as defined by claim 142 and Stefik et al. Therefore, claim 142 and all claims dependent thereon are patentable over Stefik et al. and the other references of record when taken either alone under 35 USC 102 or in combination under 35 USC 103.

In the Office Action, independent claim 124 is rejected under USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stefik et al. The Examiner asserts on page 6, lines 16-18 of the Office Action that Stefik et al. teach that the "print store" (Fig. 16) would charge a fee for providing services.

In response, claim 124 is amended so as to include limitations from claim 138. Claim 124 now recites that the print service station selectively sets a printing condition in accordance with the print order, sets the print service charge in accordance with the selected printing condition, and after the print service station prints the image data, the print service

Appln. No. 09/696,114
Amdt. dated December 23, 2003
Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2003

station determines the print charge in accordance with the print result of the copy of the ordered book.

As pointed out above, the print store of Stefik et al. does not include a function to input a print order of a customer to print an ordered book and to communicate with the data service system so as to obtain image data of the ordered book through the network.

Further, Stefik et al. do not disclose, teach or suggest structure that the print service station selectively sets a printing condition in accordance with the print order and sets the print service charge in accordance with the selected printing condition of the copy order. In other words, the print service station of the present claimed invention as defined by claim 124 sets the print service charge independent of the data service system. This feature, inter alia, is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Stefik et al.

Furthermore, Stefik et al. do not disclose, teach or suggest that after the print service station prints the image data, the print service station determines the print charge in accordance with the print result of the copy of the ordered book.

Since Stefik et al. merely teach that the print store receives digital work through a spooler, the above recited

Appln. No. 09/696,114
Amdt. dated December 23, 2003
Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2003

limitations of amended claim 124 would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made in view of Stefik et al. and the other cited references.

None of the other references of record close the gap between the present claimed invention as defined by amended claim 124 and Stefik et al. Therefore, claim 124 and all claims which are dependent thereon are patentable over Stefik et al. and the other references of record when taken either alone under 35 USC 102 or in combination under 35 USC 103.

In view of the foregoing, claims 124 and 142, and all of the claims which are dependent thereon are patentable over the cited references under 35 USC 102 as well as 35 USC 103.

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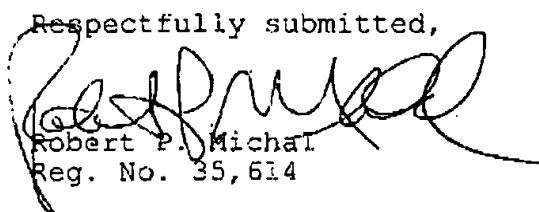
Entry of this Amendment under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.116, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner disagrees with any of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to point out where there is support for a contrary view.

Appin. No. 09/696,114
Amdt. dated December 23, 2003
Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2003

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,



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